

in February a letter from his mother, running much as follows:

" It is no longer possible to continue living at Ais. Sell the little furniture that is left. You will in any case obtain sufficient money to enable you to take third-class tickets to Paris for yourself and your grandfather. Manage it as soon as possible. I shall be waiting for you."

Young fimile acted in accordance with those instructions, but lie could not tear himself away from Aix and his friends without making with the latter a farewell excursion to Le Tholonet and the "*barrage*" of the canal reservoir planned by Ms father. When he at last took the train with old M. Aubert, his heart was heavy at the thought that he might never see Provence again. But in that respect his fears were not realised.

On reaching Paris, he found his mother residing at No. 63 Rue Monsieur-le-Prince, near the Luxembourg palace. She had obtained some assistance from friends, one of whom, Maitre Labot,¹ recommended El mile to D&sir^ Nisard, the critic and historian, famous for having tried to demonstrate that there were two moralities; and Nisard speedily procured him a free scholarship at the Lycde or college of St. Louis. This was by Madame Zola's express wish, for, however great might be her misfortunes, she

desired that
her son might continue his studies.

But Paris now seemed a horrible place to the
youthful
[Smile. All was gloom there. Orsini, Pieri, and
Rudio had
attempted the life of Napoleon III outside the
opera-house
a few weeks previously, and a kind of terror
prevailed under
the iron rule of General Espinasse and the
new Law of

¹ See *ante*, p. 27.